

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2516
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 5136

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E O 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, RP
SUBJ: MARCOS ANNOUNCES MINDANAO REORGANIZATION

REF: MANILA 4991

SUMMARY: DURING MEETING WITH MUSLIM DISSIDENTS IN MANILA
APR 21, FOLLOWING APR 17-19 DIALOGUE IN ZAMBOANGA, PRESIDENT
MARCOS ANNOUNCED DIVISION OF MANDANAO INTO TWO REGIONS,
EACH TO BE ADMINISTERED BY MUSLIM WITH CABINET

RANK. HE REPLACED FOUR ORGANIZATIONS DEALING WITH MUSLIM
PROBLEMS WITH NEW SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.
HE ACCEPTED RESIGNATIONS OF THREE MINDANAO GOVERNORS
AND TWO MAYORS AND COMMISSIONED 12 MUSLIM REBELS AS OFFICERS
IN ARMED FORCES. PRESS HAS HERALED MARCOS' ZBTEST MOVES
AS USHERING IN NEW ERA OF REFORM AND "MUSLIM SELF GOVERNMENT."
REORGANIZATION CANNOT SOLVE SOUTHERN SECESSION
PROBLEM BUT MOVES IN DIRECTION OF EVEN LIMITED AUTONOMY
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AND REPLACEMENT OF INEFFECTIVE LOCAL OFFICIALS SEEM STEPS

IN RIGHT DIRECTION. SUCCESS OF GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT ISOLATE MNLF IS PROBLEMATIC. IN VIEW MNLF CREDENTIALS ABROAD, WE DOUBT MARCOS' LATEST MANEUVERS WILL GAIN HIM CREDIT HE HOPES FOR IN INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COMMUNITY. GOP INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS TALKS WITH MNLF EITHER AT JIDDA OR UNDER OTHER AUSPICES STILL HAVE TO CRYSTALLIZE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT MARCOS MET IN MANILA APR 22 WITH MUSLIM "REBELS" WHO PARTICIPATED IN ZAMBOANGAN DIALOGUE APR 17-19 (REFTEL). PRESIDENT RECEIVED FROM PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR TO SAUDI ARABIA PANGANDAMAN (CHAIRMAN OF GOP SIDE) RESOLUTION SIGNED BY MUSLIM PARTICIPANTS DEMANDING: (A) REJECTION OF LEADERSHIP OF MNLF LEADER NUR MISUARI AND HIS DEMAND FOR RECOGNITION OF AUTONOMOUS MUSLIM STATE; (B) INTERGRATION INTO AFP OF REBEL RETURNEES; (C) PROSECUTION OF CORRUPT OFFICIALS BOTH CIVIL AND MILITARY; (D) CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN SOUTH. IN ACCEPTING RESOLUTION, PRESIDENT DIRECTED PANGANDAMAN TO CONTINUE DIALOGUE AND DESIGNATED KABIANGAN SULU (HOMETOWN OF NUR MISUARI) AS NEXT SITE FOR TALKS.

2. PRESIDENT MARCOS ANNOUNCED CREATION OF TWO ADDITIONAL REGIONS IN MINDANAO TO BE HEADED BY MUSLIMS WITH CABINET RANK. IN ADDING TWO MORE REGIONS TO COUNTRY'S EXISTING ELEVEN, PRESIDENT SAID IT WAS NOW GOVERNMENT POLICY TO TRANSFER AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FROM CHRISTIANS TO MUSLIMS IN MINDANAO. ONE REGION WILL COMPRISE PROVINCES OF MAGUINDANAO, SULTAN KUDARAT, LANA DEL NORTE AND LANAONDEL SUR. OTHER NEW REGION WILL BE COMPOSED OF PROVINCES OF SULU, TAWI TAWI, BASILAN AND ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR. NAMES OF NEW REGIONAL DIRECTORS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AFTER CONSULTATIONS WITH PEOPLE OF AREA CONCERNED. MARCOS CLAIMED NEW DIRECTORS WILL BE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IN THESE AREAS. "WE SHALL DELEGATE TO THEM THE AUTHORITY OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IN THOSE PROVINCES IN AS MUCH AS THEY ARE MUSLIM OCCUPIED PROVINCES."

3. PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED HE WAS ABOLISHING FOUR SEPARATE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS DEALING WITH MUSLIM PROBLEMS.
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THESE ARE: (A) COMMISSION ON NATIONAL INTERGRATION; (B) MINDANAO DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY; (C) PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN MINDANAO; (D) SPECIAL PROGRAM OF ASSISTANCE FOR THE REHABILITATION OF EVACUEES (SPARE). TO REPLACE THEM PRESIDENT CREATED NEW SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY WHICH WILL RECEIVE FIVE MILLION PESOS IN NEXT BUDGET. PRESIDENT ALSO DIRECTED FINANCE DEPARTMENT TO RELEASE 15 MILLION PESOS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

OF VARIOUS MINDANAO PROJECTS.

4. IN DIRECTING WHAT HE TERMED "MUSLIMIZATION" OF VARIOUS AREAS IN SOUTH, MARCOS DECLARED, "IT IS THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT O IMMEDIATELY DELEGATE AUTHORITY IN MUSLIM AREAS TO MUSLIMS AND NOT CHRISTIANS." THIS COVERS GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTORS. AS EARNEST OF INTENTIONS, PRESIDENT ACCEPTED RESIGNATIONS OF FIVE OFFICIALS. THESE INCLUDED GOVERNORS OF SULU (MURPHY SANGKULA), LANA DEL NORTE (ARSENIO QUIBRANZA), AND LANA DEL SUR (TARJATA LUCMAN) AND MAYORS OF BASILAN CITY (LEROY BROWN) AND SIASI, SULU (TETINA ANNI).

5. PRESIDENT COMMISSIONED 12 OFFICERS FROM VARIOUS MUSLIM GROUPS INTO AFP AS SECOND LIEUTENANTS. HE ALSO DIRECTED DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE TO ABSORB INTO UNITS UNDER 42ND ENGINEERING BRIGADE OTHER REBELS WHO HAVE RALLIED TO GOVERNMENT AND DESIRE TO INTEGRATE INTO REGULAR MILITARY SERVICE. THEY ARE TO BE TRAINED IN CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING WORK.

6. COMMENT: WHILE ZAMBOANGA DIALOGUE AND "REBELS" MEETING WITH PRESIDENT LACKS CONSIDERABLE CREDIBILITY DUE TO ABSENCE OF MNLF, GOP DECISION TO PROMOTE ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION OF MINDANAO, ABOLISH SUPERFLUOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN FAVOR OF INTEGRATED AGENCY AND REMOVE CORRUPT OR INEFFICIENT LOCAL OFFICIALS (ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE REPLACED BY COMPETENT ADMINISTRATORS) REPRESENTS STEP FORWARD. "SELF RULE" ARRANGEMENT CONTEMPLATED UNDER NEW SET UP IS HARDLY AUTONOMY OF THE TYPE MNLF APPEARS DESIRE BUT IT REPRESENTS DECIDED SOPHISTICATION IN GOP'S PREVIOUS THINKING AND SOME GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION OF KIND OF READJUSTMENT SITUATION IN SOUTH REQUIRES. CONTINUED MNLF OPPOSITION TO
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GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, COULD EVENTUALLY MAKE LATEST CHANGES MEANINGLESS. PRIMARY TARGET OF GOP DECISIONS WOULD APPEAR TO BE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COMMUNITY PRELIMINARY TO KAMPALA CONFERENCE IN MAY. GIVEN STRENGTH OF MNLF CREDENTIALS ABROAD, WE DOUBT MARCOS WILL GARNER THE SUPPORT HE THINKS HE DESERVES. MEANWHILE MNLF MAINTAINS OMINOUS SILENCE. WE EXPECT, HOWEVER, LATEST EVENTS MIGHT PROMPT THEM ISSUE SOME STATEMENT OR EVEN UNDERTAKE SOME ACTIONS ESPECIALLY IF MNLF FEELS GOVERNMENTAL PROPOSALS MIGHT ENCOUNTER SOME RECEPTIVITY IN THE SOUTH.

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7. ALTHOUGH VARIOUS DECISIONS MAY BE TOO LITTLE TOO LATE,
THEY ARE RESPONSIVE TO SOME OF RESPONSIBLE MUSLIM CRITICISM
IN PAST EVEN THOUGH THEY DO NOT ADDRESS SUCH MAJOR ISSUES
AS LAND. AS USUAL, TEST OF SINCERITY OF GOP'S LATEST MOVES
WILL BE EXTENT TO WHICH ACTUALLY SEEKS TO IMPLEMENT
DECISIONS.
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